

Region VII News

Informing Kansans, Nebraskans, Missourians and Iowans



A Message from Sam Jones Region VII SBA Administrator



The SBA is experiencing a time of change and a time of adjustment to changes. Our leadership is changing and our internal processes are continuing to change. This has led to a renewed focus to continue listening to ideas and streamlining agency processes to make the delivery of access to capital, counseling and training to small business owners more efficient.

We soon expect a visit to Region VII from Steven Preston, appointed by President Bush as the new SBA National Administrator. Preston, a former executive vice president at ServiceMaster Corporation, plans to visit district offices in each of the ten SBA regions across the nation on a "Listening Tour." After talking to him by phone several times and meeting him in person at our recent SBA management meeting in New Orleans, I am confident his many skills will benefit the agency and our small business customers.

As one of his first acts, the new Administrator appointed Pat Rea, the SBA's regional administrator from Chicago, to lead an initiative aimed at streamlining processes for the agency's disaster loan program. Pat's first task will be to speed the disbursement of disaster loans to victims of last year's hurricanes. His background in military logistics leadership makes him well suited to this task – one larger in scope than any other disaster response in U.S. history.

President Bush also appointed Jovita Carranza, who achieved success overseeing operations at UPS's Louisville, Ky., facility, to serve as the SBA's new deputy administrator. Hispanic Magazine named Carranza Hispanic Woman of the Year in 2004, and her experience in streamlining processes will serve the agency well.

Recently, two others relatively new to SBA visited Region VII. Michael Hager, the SBA Associate Administrator of Capital Access joined us for a Lender's Roundtable in Kansas City to hear community lender concerns and ideas. Tom Dyer, SBA's Associate Administrator of Governmental Affairs, and I talked with economic development leaders last month in two states to advance better state/federal coordination in the area of entrepreneurial development. In addition, I have spent the greater part of the year visiting lenders, SBA resource partners (leaders of state Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), SCORE Chapters and SBA sponsored Women's Business Centers), and other SBA stakeholders (state governments and non-profit service providers).

The ideas shared with us won't likely change the SBA's business practices overnight, but our agency's new focus on listening to ways to improve processes will lead to improved performance in the future. That's good for the SBA, for our small business customers and for the American people as taxpayers.

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*All of the SBA programs and services
are provided to the public on a non-
discriminatory basis.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style.

New SBA Administrator Steven Preston to Visit Kansas City in October; Honors Employees at 2006 Fall Meeting



The SBA's new National Administrator Steven Preston introduced himself to Regional Administrators, district directors, and other members of SBA's management board meeting in the first week of September 2006 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He is tentatively scheduled to visit Kansas City on October 5th and 6th to meet with employees and small business owners.

Honored at the meeting were A. Dean Cotton, Deputy Regional Administrator for SBA's Region VII, and Joe Folsom, Iowa SBA District Office Director, with certificates for 30 Years of Federal Service.

Officials Meet with Lenders

The Region VII Office welcomed Associate Deputy Administrator for Capital Access Michael Hager to Kansas City, MO, to meet with lenders from across Region VII at a Lender Roundtable held at Commerce Bank in and sponsored by SBA.



SBA Regional Lender Specialists Get the Scoop

Lender Specialists from across the Region VII states of Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri listen to Mike Hager (center) talk about the coming changes affecting the future of the SBA.



St. Louis SBA Employee Honored

Rose Garland, left, the Public Information Officer for the St. Louis District Office, received the St. Louis 2006 Federal Executive Board Professional Employee of the Year Award. She is shown on the left with her award and the presenter.

Get Ready.....for Small Business Training on READYTALK.COM

Ready-Talk...It's not just for intra-agency training anymore. In August, the Des Moines District SBA Office used the SBA's ReadyTalk interactive, web-based communications system to provide four educational seminars to entrepreneurs throughout the state of Iowa.

Additionally, the Des Moines District Office is marketing their training by forging relationships with other organizations who will offer SBA training to their members as a membership perk, further expanding their pool of possible participants.

"ReadyTalk", allows individuals or groups to participate interactively from their home, office or in a group. Participants dial into a conference call while following along with the visual presentations using an Internet connection," Des Moines District Director Joe Folsom said. "Every district office has the ability to use it."

In the past, the DMDO has used ReadyTalk for lender training like many other district offices; but in August, it launched its first effort to provide training on specific topics directly to entrepreneurs in Iowa. The topics were: *International Trade Assistance for Small Businesses*, *SBA – Your Small*



Business Resource, *Winning Federal Contracts*, and *Web Resources – What Every Small Business Should Know*.

Selected in mid-July, they were heavily promoted for more than a month by the District Lender Newsletter, the District's Web site, the Community Calendar Web sites of all TV Stations in the state, and media releases. Direct marketing by e-mail was used for two of the sessions – the one on International Trade and the one on Government Contracting. The office is experimenting with morning and evening sessions to determine which are more convenient to the attendee.

Randy LaBounty and John Blum from the U.S. Export Assistance Center in St. Louis (which serves the state of Iowa) taught *International Trade Assistance for Small Businesses*. It was targeted to businesses currently exporting, producing products for export, or thinking about exporting. They explained the services of the U.S. Export Assistance Center, SBA's financial and business development assistance programs for exporters, and the international trade programs of the Iowa Department of Economic Development. State SBDC Director Jon Ryan, SCORE member Jim Williams and Kathy Hill of the International Division of the Iowa Department of Economic Development also participated by explaining how their resources can help.

To provide a general overview of the SBA, Deputy District Director Tom Harbison and Lead Lender Relations Specialist Vern Sample presented *SBA – Your Small Business Resource*. From his office in Omaha, Nebraska, Procurement Center Representative Dwight Johnson taught a session on *Winning Federal Contracts* to highlight the help available from SBA to entrepreneurs hoping to sell their products and services to the world's largest purchaser of goods and services – the U.S. Government.

District Director Joe Folsom taught *Web Resources – What Every Small Business Should Know* on August 24th to show entrepreneurs how to get the most out of the SBA and SBA funded organization's Web sites. Participants explored www.sba.gov, the Federal Government's Business.gov Web site at www.business.gov, SCORE's Web site at www.score.org and the Iowa Small Business Development Center's Web site at www.iowasbdc.org. These four sites are some of the Internet's most extensive sites for small businesses information, opportunities and assistance.

More than 75 people signed in to the four sessions, but more people participated. The City of Davenport, Iowa, offered the *Winning Federal Contracts* session to the public using a speaker phone and an LCD projector. This allowed sixteen people to participate with only one computer signing into the session.

"Unfortunately, ReadyTalk only tracks who signs in and we know there were multiple participants at the Davenport site," Folsom said.

The provision of web-based public training is a valuable tool to offer more educational opportunities to entrepreneurs in Iowa, at a lower cost and allows us to be more flexible and provide the best instructors participating from a distance," Folsom said.

The District is planning their next ReadyTalk session, a repeat of the *Winning Federal Contracts* session, on September 26, 2006. It will be offered under a new marketing strategy by the Greater Des Moines Partnership – as a feature of their business education series for their membership.